



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 157

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2011

No. 147

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

October 4, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

IN HONOR OF ROGER KENNEDY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I note with sorrow the passing of Roger Kennedy last Friday. Roger had a long and storied career that exemplified notions of public service. He was, indeed, a renaissance man.

It's hard to think of anything that Roger had not done in his lifetime, with the possible exception of hold elective office. He was Director of the National Park Service, Director of the

Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, vice president of finance for the Ford Foundation. He was special assistant to three Cabinet Secretaries, a lawyer, a journalist, and somehow found time to write 10 books. Actually, he had run unsuccessfully for Congress against fellow Minnesotan Gene McCarthy over 60 years ago. How might history have been different if he had won.

You found out about Roger's exploits in bits and pieces. When you were engaged in conversation, he would reach back into the past to illustrate points with very tangible, concrete, easy-to-understand examples, often with himself having been in the middle of it.

My legislative director, Janine Benner, and I became acquainted with Roger as we were dealing with policies to prevent, cope, and recover from natural disasters. One of Roger's books was titled "Wildfire and Americans: How to Save Lives, Property, and Your Tax Dollars." His kind words mentioning us by name in the acknowledgement was a high point of both of our careers. He was a valued participant in sessions we would have before and after Hurricane Katrina. He was a keen student of the built environment, dealing with unintended consequences of policy, whether putting Los Alamos nuclear laboratory facilities in the middle of an area that had been repeatedly burned by wildfires or digging into the history of the early South, slavery and land use, the Jeffersonian model. He provided information and insights that were unique, profound, and provocative. Even after his retirement, he continued to be a scholar, an advocate, a friend, and a mentor—especially a mentor.

I have read the articles that were about Roger in The New York Times, The Washington Post, but none captured better than a note from our legislative director, Janine Benner, who wrote, "Roger was a big thinker, un-

derstanding the way things in the world fit together. I loved just listening to him talk. It made me feel like at least there were a few people who understand how the world really should be. I always kept my notes from the conversations in hopes that they would make me smarter. He was devoted to public service, even in 'retirement.' He was always thinking about ways to make the world a better place. While he was very focused on the past, writing books about history, he was a master at using that knowledge to inform himself and others about the future. Preventing devastating damage from wildfires and his exploration of the flame zone was a great example."

Mr. Speaker, we often talk about someone's passing as an opportunity to celebrate their life. It's hard to imagine a better life to be celebrated, more productive, with greater joy and insight, than the life Roger Kennedy lived.

Today people in government seem incapable of dealing with big issues, matters of consequence in a thoughtful and cooperative fashion. Well, there's no better role model for any of us to meet the challenge in all our opportunities and responsibilities than Roger Kennedy. On behalf of our legislative director, Janine Benner, and the people in our office who were privileged to know and work with Roger, we extend our sympathies to his wife, Frances, and Roger's circle of family and friends. We are all going forward strengthened by Roger's friendship, scholarship, and example.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, this Friday will be the 10th anniversary of our troops being committed to Afghanistan. This commitment by the previous

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H6507

administration and Congress was justified because bin Laden and al Qaeda were responsible for 9/11. But now bin Laden is dead; al Qaeda is disbursed all around the world.

Beside me is a poster of an honor guard carrying a flag-draped coffin off a plane at Dover Air Force Base. To accompany the photo, I will read into the RECORD an editorial from Bob Schieffer titled "The Real Cost of War":

[I was in an airport lounge the other day when I saw a woman across the way. Why I kept staring, I don't know. Maybe it was just that she seemed so sad. And then I understood. And I looked away, hoping she had not seen me stare. Because in her lap was an American flag, neatly folded into a triangle and placed in a clear plastic case, a flag folded the way it always is when it is given to a soldier's family as the soldier's coffin is lowered into the grave.

I figured her to be a soldier's mother, and I couldn't help but wonder what memories that flag evoked as she held it there. Did it remind her of the first time she had seen her child in the delivery room, or was it the memory of seeing him go off to school that first day, or when he brought home the prize from the science fair, or maybe made the touchdown, or gave her the first Valentine when he wrote out, "Mommy, I love you."

I keep thinking about all the talk in Washington about the high cost of defense and how we have to cut the Pentagon budget before it bankrupts the country. But as I watched that woman, budgets seemed to be such a small part of all of it. No, the real cost of war is not what we pay in dollars and cents. The real cost is what we take from a mother who is left with just a memory and a neatly folded flag in a clear plastic case.]

This was over a year ago, and I want to thank Bob Schieffer. I don't think it can be said better than what he said that day, which I just read into the RECORD.

Why this Congress continues to complain about budgets and cuts and deficits and debts, and our young men and women are walking the roads of Afghanistan, getting their legs blown off and getting killed, and we sit here in Congress and don't bring it up as an issue.

I want to thank my friends on both sides of the aisle and the Republicans on this side of the aisle who are trying to say to Mr. Obama, No, don't leave them there until 2014. Karzai is a crook. He is a corrupt leader. You are spending \$10 billion a month in Afghanistan, and you can't even audit the books in Afghanistan. And kids are dying. Yet right here in America, we are cutting programs for children to get a pint of milk in school; and we are saying to a senior citizen, No sandwich at the senior citizens center because we can't afford it. But, Mr. Karzai, we will send you \$10 billion.

Mr. Speaker, it's borrowed money. It's not even Uncle Sam's money. It's probably Uncle Chang's money. But more importantly than the money is what Bob Schieffer said: It's the pain of war. And this Congress needs to come together and say to Mr. Obama, Let's bring them home this year, next year, but not wait until 2014, 2015.

Mr. Speaker, I will close, as I always do on the floor of the House, please,

God, bless our men and women in uniform. Please, God, bless the families of our men and women in uniform. Please, God, in your loving arms, hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. I ask God to bless the House and the Senate that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for its people. I ask God to give wisdom, strength, and courage to President Obama, that he will do what is right in the eyes of God's people. And I will say three times, God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

□ 1010

COLOMBIAN WORKERS CONSTANTLY THREATENED AND AT RISK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I was in Colombia at the end of August with a delegation organized by the Washington Office on Latin America.

In Medellin, we met with the National Labor School, or ENS, to discuss the current labor situation in Colombia. Their reports on threatened and murdered unionists are internationally recognized; and because of this, ENS faces constant threats and efforts to discredit them.

While not at the levels of the early 2000s, violence against Colombia's workers continues. It is persistent and frequent. It is a reality that cannot be denied, and it is meant to silence people. At least 40 trade unionists have been murdered since President Santos took office last year.

One benchmark in the Colombia Labor Action Plan is for the attorney general's office to meet with ENS and determine how to address the more than 2,900 cases of murdered unionists, of which 90 percent remain in impunity. The first meeting happened in May, but there's been no second meeting. In Bogota, I met with Deputy Attorney General Juan Carlos Forero. I asked him when the next meeting would happen, and he said "imminently." Five weeks later, still no meeting.

Last week, Human Rights Watch sent a study to Colombian Attorney General Viviane Morales. It says "virtually no progress" has been made in getting convictions for killings of labor activists that have occurred in just the past 4½ years. So virtually no progress on recent murders of labor activists, and little progress on past cases.

Mr. Speaker, I met with port workers, campesinos, workers on palm oil plantations, and petroleum and factory workers. Their reality is filled with risk, threats, and even death. They are not valued as human beings, Colombian citizens, or productive members of society. In Cartagena, port workers went on strike in March. Their working con-

ditions are inhumane, and they are forced to work under various subcontracting schemes. These contracts deny them basic benefits and keep them in constant uncertainty about whether they will be working next week or even the next day. They just want the right to negotiate their contracts directly with their employers, the port associations.

The port workers ended their strike after just a few days because the Santos government promised to facilitate talks between the workers and the port associations. But nothing happened. Nothing changed. In fact, some things are worse. As part of the LAP, the most common subcontracting scheme, the so-called "cooperatives," was abolished, except nothing was done to facilitate direct contracting between workers and their employers. So a new scheme has popped up called "simplified joint stock companies," or SAS. Good-bye cooperatives, hello SAS. Meet the new boss; worse than the old boss.

The government has done little to help, unfortunately. When I asked Vice President Garzon about the port workers, he promised to meet again with their union leader. Mr. Speaker, it's not the workers he needs to meet with and convince to negotiate. It's the presidents of the port associations.

Oil workers from Meta showed me photographs and documents describing poor living and working conditions, unfair contracts, and how the Canadian Venezuelan oil company, Pacific Rubiales, acts like a sovereign government on Colombian soil, destroying public roads, firing workers for organizing, and calling in security forces to tear gas striking workers. I'm sure it's not the whole picture, but once again striking workers returned to work because the government promised to open talks with the company. Again, all the workers are asking for is the right to negotiate directly with the company about their contracts and their living and working conditions, and once again the Colombian Government let the workers down.

In September, the strike was renewed, more explosive on all sides than the last one, because nothing had changed since July. Bruno Moro, the U.N. delegate in Colombia, called on everyone to come to the table and resolve the crisis, describing the conflict as the result of no one creating conditions for dialogue. The workers have again returned to work because of agreements by the government to open talks with the company. This time, I hope the government keeps its word.

Mr. Speaker, nothing I saw in Colombia indicated things have changed for the better on the ground for Colombia's workers. Before we take up the FTA, we must demand concrete improvements in labor rights and security for Colombia's workers. Whatever we're doing now isn't working, it isn't making a difference, and it simply isn't enough.